

CAL FIRE NEWS RELEASE

California Department of Forestry and Fire Protection Amador-El Dorado Unit

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Beware While Burning

Camino – "With record breaking high temperatures in our area coupled with the lack of precipitation, this winter has created a problem for California residents. The California Department of Water Resources has indicated that the snow pack which provides the state with about a third of its water is at 20% of normal. Last year at this time we were at 150% of normal" states CAL FIRE Unit Chief Mike Kaslin of the Amador-El Dorado Unit. Chief Kaslin adds "almost daily there have been small wildland fires because the person burning their debris piles either lost control of the piles or didn't completely extinguish the piles and the piles re-ignited. These fires threaten the surrounding community and can cause the person who started the fire a lot of grief. They may face legal action if the fire escapes their control and burns onto another person's property *and* they could be held liable for the suppression costs to put the fire out."

Historically, escaped residential debris burn pile fires are one of the leading causes of wildland fires in the Amador-El Dorado Unit. Too often residents become complacent about door yard burn piles because they have done it for years, sometimes even decades, and may not take all the precautions they should.

It's essential that you make your property "fire safe" with 100 feet of defensible space around all structures but when you choose to dispose of the brush, limbs, and other trimmings in burn piles remember these simple rules:

- Immediately prior to igniting your burn pile, you **MUST** check burn day status by calling your local Air Pollution Control District/Air Quality Management District (see below). If it is a permissive burn day, make sure you or another responsible adult will be able to be in attendance at all times, until the burn pile is completely out.
- To ensure your burn project is completely out, douse the fire with plenty of water and use a shovel to stir the water into the ground, because the fire can lurk for days, weeks or even months.
- Quickly call 911 if your fire does escape your control.
- Clear combustible or flammable material a minimum of 10 feet from all burn piles, and keep a shovel, rake, and charged water hose near your burn pile.

For Burn Day Status

Local Air Pollution Control District/Air Quality Management District Phone Numbers

Amador County (209) 223-6246,

El Dorado County Western Slope (530) 621-5897 or (866) 621-5897.

El Dorado County (Tahoe Basin) (530) 621-5842 or (888) 332-2876. .

For more information about defensible space requirements, as well as safe burning practices visit our website at www.fire.ca.gov.

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